

Strategy Research Project

Civilian Workforce Development within the United States Army

by

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United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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The civilian workforce is an integral part of the Army; it provides essential services in support of the mission. Serving as force multipliers, our civilian employees provide myriad requisite skills, thereby freeing uniformed members for war-fighting tasks. As the military moves deeper into an era of significant resource reductions, it becomes even more vital that its civilian employees are properly trained and educated to perform their functions effectively and efficiently. The Army must seek to develop the civilian workforce across the spectrum by making effective use of the three educational domains--operational, institutional, and self-development--while leveraging all available mediums to ensure maximum impact with minimum expenditure. This Strategic Research Paper (SRP) examines the policy behind workforce development, describes current Army workforce development, considers plans for the future, and offers recommendations for improvement.

Civilian Workforce Development within the United States Army

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this oath freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter. So help me God.

—Army Civilian Oath of Office¹

Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1, *The Army Profession*, defines an Army professional as one “who meets the Army’s certification criteria of competence, character, and commitment. Army professionals are experts certified within the profession and bonded with comrades in a shared identity and culture of sacrifice and service to the nation.”² The United States Army Civilian Corps (ACC) stands ready to exemplify that definition in support of the Army mission and as members of the Army Profession.³

The Army civilian workforce does face significant challenges for the foreseeable future, primarily due to current and anticipated fiscal constraints. The ACC currently comprises approximately 23 percent of the total Army force, with over 300,000 employees.⁴ A substantial reduction to the workforce is expected, but, as with the uniformed force, the extent of that reduction is yet unknown.⁵ This uncertainty presents multiple challenges to Army leaders at all levels. The Army does not have the luxury to accept less than trained and ready personnel. We must ensure that our civilian employees are fully prepared to support the Army mission and “develop a bench” so that employees are prepared for the next level of responsibility.

It is important to remember that Department of the Army civilians are an integral and vital part of the Army community, as conveyed by the Army Civilian Oath of Office

(See epigraph). Civilian employees must feel that they are members of a community and a part of something larger than themselves. Following sequestration of funding under the Budget Control Act of 2011,⁶ the federal workforce has endured hiring and pay freezes, furloughs, and award restrictions. That has caused significant morale issues within the workforce.⁷ If left unaddressed, our best and brightest employees may well depart for the private sector and we will have difficulty attracting and retaining the best new applicants.⁸ An effective workforce development program not only accomplishes the primary task of better preparing employees to accomplish their mission, but it also improves morale as employees have demonstrable evidence that the Army is willing to invest in their future as well.

The civilian workforce is an integral part of the Army; it provides essential services in support of the mission. Serving as force multipliers, our civilian employees provide myriad requisite skills, thereby freeing uniformed members for war-fighting tasks.⁹ As the military moves deeper into an era of significant resource reductions, it becomes even more vital that its civilian employees are properly trained and educated to perform their functions effectively and efficiently. The Army must seek to develop the civilian workforce across the spectrum by making effective use of the three educational domains - operational, institutional, and self-development - while leveraging all available mediums to ensure maximum impact with minimum expenditure. This Strategic Research Paper examines the policy behind workforce development, describes current Army workforce development, considers plans for the future, and offers recommendations for improvement.

Human Capital

Any conversation regarding workforce development requires a general understanding of human capital as a concept. The Oxford Dictionary defines human capital as “the skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual or population, viewed in terms of their value or cost to an organization or country.”¹⁰

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) required federal agencies to “set goals, measure performance, and report on their accomplishments in order to assess their productivity and performance.” Effective performance-based management requires the agency to “strategically manage all of their resources (financial, information technology, and people) to achieve their missions and goals.”¹¹

Congress directed the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) to provide information that might help federal agencies implement performance-based management as required by the GPRA. To gather this information, GAO interviewed representatives of nine private sector organizations known for successful human capital management.¹² In 2000, the GAO produced the report, *Human Capital: Key Principles from Nine Private Sector Organizations*. The report identified ten basic principles of human capital management common to all of the surveyed companies. Among these principles were the concepts that human capital management must be considered as essential to effectively frame the organizational mission, establish strategic goals, and inculcate core values. Additionally, employees must be hired, developed, and retained with competencies in mind, and in an environment where individuals are able to support, and learn from others.¹³

The principles outlined in the GAO report affirmed that human capital must be viewed as the foundation for a successful organization.¹⁴ Additionally, the report found that Federal agencies could adopt these principles fairly easily.¹⁵

On June 10, 2011, the Honorable Thomas R. Lamont, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower & Reserve Affairs, approved the Human Capital Campaign Plan and its accompanying strategy map. The Major Objectives (MO) of that plan included MO 10: “Create Army civilian leadership, education, training, and experience aligned to deliberately develop Army Civilian leaders through defining executive competencies requirements/civilian talent management strategies.”¹⁶

Current Department of Defense Policy

The Department of Defense (DoD) established its commitment to civilian workforce development by establishing the following three requirements as policy:¹⁷

1. A diverse cadre of highly capable, high-performing, and results-oriented civilian leaders shall be developed and sustained to lead effectively in increasingly complex environments, ensure continuity of leadership, and maintain a learning organization that drives transformation and continuous improvement across the enterprise.
2. Leadership competencies of the civilian workforce shall be assessed periodically, and appropriate learning opportunities (including education, training, self-development, and assignments) shall be provided to broaden experience and increase leadership capability.
3. Investments in civilian leader development programs shall be planned, programmed, and budgeted at levels sufficient to provide for the deliberate development of civilian leaders at all levels of the continuum, aligned with the DoD [Department of Defense] Civilian Leader Development Framework and Continuum to maximize overall return on investment.

The DoD also established six core and six fundamental competencies that, taken together, “provide a blueprint for deliberate development of DoD civilian leaders below the executive level.”¹⁸

Table 1. Core and Fundamental Competencies

Core Competencies	Fundamental Competencies
1. Leading Change	1. Interpersonal Skills
2. Leading People	2. Integrity and Honesty
3. Results Driven	3. Written Communication
4. Business Acumen	4. Oral Communication
5. Building Coalitions	5. Continual Learning
6. Enterprise-wide Perspective	6. Public Service

These competencies provide the foundation for civilian workforce development within the United States Army.

Civilian Education Framework

The Professional Civilian Education Council defines a certified member of the Army Civilian Corps (ACC) as one who “has achieved technical, functional area(s) and demonstrated leadership competencies and attributes commensurate with career expectations. Members have, throughout their ACC careers, exhibited a commitment to the Army Profession through their competence, willingness to embody the Army Values, and ability to perform their duties with confidence, moral courage, and mental and emotional maturity.”¹⁹

Army civilians meet this standard through a combination of training, education, and experience. However, the learning process will never be truly complete--it is an on-going, career-long process. As the mission evolves, ACC members must acquire new knowledge, skills, and abilities. When learning ceases, stagnation begins. Effective learning in adulthood is characterized by the ability to immediately apply the newfound

knowledge within the workplace.²⁰ Life-long learning is a critical component of civilian development at all levels.

The Army Training and Leader Development Report

General Shinseki (Chief of Staff, Army, 1999-2003) commissioned the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) to determine training and leader development requirements for the Army. In 2003, this panel completed a study of the Army Civilian Corps. It identified four major imperatives and twelve supporting recommendations.²¹

Table 2. ATLDP Imperatives and Supporting Recommendations

Imperative	Supporting Recommendation(s)
1. Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make Army Civilian Training, Education, and Leader Development a high Priority. b) Ensure the Army Civilian Performance Evaluation System Provides Effective Performance Accountability and Provides for Professional Development.
2. Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Create a Training and Development Paradigm that Incorporates a Lifelong Learning Philosophy. b) Replace the Current Civilian Career Programs and Career Fields with a Broad Career Management System for all Civilians in Support of Readiness. c) Implement a Developmental Continuum for Army Civilians. d) Promote Self-Development as a Part of the Army Lifelong Learning Philosophy. e) Develop a Centralized Army Education System Integrating Civilian and Military Training and Education and Development Where Appropriate.

	f) Publish and Make Accessible the Guidelines, Definition, and Best Practices for Mentoring Partnerships.
3. Interpersonal Skills	a) Make Interpersonal Skill Development a Priority.
4. Army Culture	<p>a) Integrate and Strengthen Relationships Within the Army.</p> <p>b) The Army must Increase its Commitments to Army Civilians.</p> <p>c) Adopt and Incorporate into Doctrine the Following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Army Civilian Corps is an experienced Professional cadre committed to serve. ii. The Army Civilian Corps provides mission-essential capability, stability, and continuity during war and peace in support of the soldier.

Two years later, in 2005, the Office of the Secretary of the Army directed the Executive Office of the Headquarters, Department of the Army, to establish a Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL) Task Force. The RETAL Task Force mission was to identify requirements designed to produce “Pentathletes,” identify overlap or underlap in current policies and programs and identify elements of those programs to sustain or improve. The RETAL Task Force released their Civilian Report in May of 2006. That report identified three major requirements for the Army Civilian Corps:²²

1. An enterprise strategy focused on the mission and identity of the Army Civilian Corps.

2. A management system to ensure effective acquisition, management, sustainment, and retention of civilian employees.
3. An effective and properly resourced civilian development system.

The requirements identified by the ATLDP and RETAL provide an effective training and education roadmap. Further, they provide a means to benchmark current and future workforce development within the Army, and, when viewed in the context of the DoD competencies, serve as an effective means to frame the environment and the issues. The RETAL determined that not all of the recommendations made by the ATLDP had been implemented; currently most have been implemented since publication of the RETAL report. Notable exceptions are those areas that were to be captured under the now defunct National Security Personnel System, such as performance evaluations and metrics associated with training and education. The following analysis of current Army civilian development under the Civilian Workforce Transformation leads to recommendations for sustainment and improvement of this critical process.²³

Army Civilian Workforce Development

Acculturation

As outlined in the Army Leader Development Strategy, an important concept in the overall Army workforce development strategy is that serving as an Army civilian employee is not simply about doing a job. Rather, it is about being a part of the Army community, a part of something larger than self. This concept makes initial and ongoing acculturation a fundamental aspect of career development for Army civilians.²⁴

Training and Doctrine Command is currently developing an acculturation program to provide new employees with “a positive socialization experience for newly

employed Army Civilians to learn, understand, and foster an appreciation for Army culture, and to reduce the amount of time it takes to become fully productive members of the Army Profession."²⁵

This program has four stated goals:

1. Integrate current processes and programs to create a standard centralized framework with decentralized tailoring and execution by commands.
2. Build employee confidence by developing their competence, character, and commitment to the Army Profession.
3. Develop a program that provides the tools, resources, and knowledge for the newly employed Army Civilian to be successful.
4. Improve new employee engagement by increasing commitment of the Employee, the Supervisor, and the Leadership to improve productivity and increase retention.²⁶

This on-boarding process can take up to a year to complete. It includes such activities as sponsorship, reception and integration counseling, and required training. It is designed to provide a positive socialization experience for newly employed Army Civilians to learn, understand, and foster an appreciation for Army culture, and to reduce the amount of time it takes to become fully productive members of the Army Profession.²⁷

Educational Domains

As stated in Army Doctrine Publication 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, career education progresses across three domains: operational, institutional, and self-development:²⁸

The operational training domain consists of the training activities of organizations at home station, at maneuver combat training centers, during joint exercises, at mobilization centers, and while operationally deployed. This domain includes assignments in the operational Army and the generating force.²⁹

Institutional training takes place in the Army's institutional training and education system, which primarily includes training base centers and schools that provide initial training and subsequent professional military education for Soldiers, military leaders, and Army civilians. This domain includes the Army's centers of excellence and schools, both inside and external to the U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.³⁰

The self-development domain consists of planned, goal-oriented learning that reinforces and expands the depth and breadth of an individual's knowledge base, self-awareness, and situational awareness. It complements institutional and operational learning, enhances professional competence; and meets personal objectives. Within this domain, Army leaders expect Soldiers and Army civilians to hone their skills, increase their knowledge, and close gaps from institutional training and operational assignments.³¹

These domains are mutually supportive. They should be integrated into a holistic learning process and address identified training and educational needs.

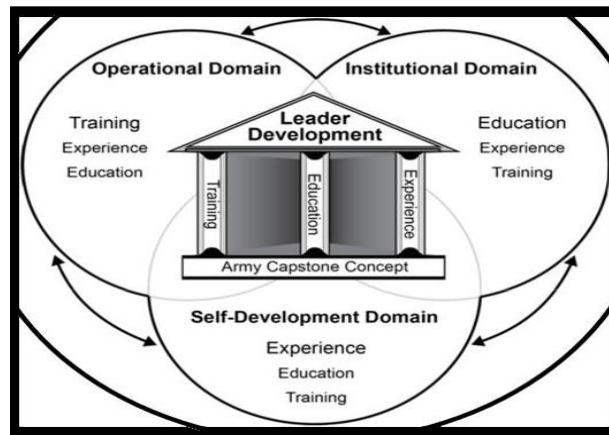


Figure 1. Educational Domains³²

The Army Civilian Workforce

All civilian employees have specific training and education needs based on their respective fields; these needs are generally identified and facilitated through their Career Program (CP). Civilian employees are also categorized into four broad sub-groups, with differing training and education needs for each: Individuals, Technical Experts, Aspiring Functional Leaders/Managers, and Aspiring Enterprise Leaders.³³

The programmatic elements outlined in the following pages provide a variety of means to support civilian employee career development within each of these subgroups.

Army Civilian Education System (CES)

The Army has taken significant strides in creating an effective workforce development program. Its CES roughly parallels the counterpart educational systems for Soldiers (Officer Education System, and the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System). Provided by the Army Management and Staff College (AMSC), the CES provides civilian employees with knowledge needed to better support their uniformed counterparts. Civilian employees with prior service who have completed comparable courses in uniform are eligible to receive equivalency credit. Training is both web-based and residential, and is centrally funded. The system includes:³⁴

- The Foundation Course: for all new employees.
- The Basic Course: General Schedule (GS)-01 through GS-09 (and equivalent).
- The Intermediate Course: GS-10 through GS-12 (and equivalent).
- The Advanced Course: GS-13 through GS-15 (and equivalent).
- Continuing Education for Senior Leaders: GS-14 and GS-15.

Previously, employees took these courses in sequence, but an April 2012 All Army Activities message changed the mandate so that employees now must take only the course aligned with their pay grade.³⁵

CES also provides the courses listed below via web based training:³⁶

- The Action Officer Development Course
- The Supervisor Development Course
- The Manager Development Course

Although CES is already an effective program, the AMSC has identified room for improvement.³⁷ It is currently working an upgrade designed to transition from the legacy CES to the new Professional Civilian Education program in FY15.

Building on the civilian competencies, CES is broken out into six Army Learning Areas (ALAs): the Army Profession, professional competence, team building, adaptability, lifelong learning, and comprehensive fitness.³⁸ These ALAs will facilitate employee movement into and through five levels of Professional Civilian Education. Level 1 serves new members of the ACC, and Level 5 prepares senior civilian employees to serve at the enterprise level.³⁹

Army Regulation 350-1 mandates certain elements of the CES based on grade and position, but there are virtually no negative consequences for failing to do so.⁴⁰ The only true ramification for not completing mandatory courses directly affects those who have an interest in continuing education, as the Army requires completion of the CES Advanced Course as a prerequisite for attendance at institutes of higher learning such as the Harvard Senior Executive Fellows and Senior Level Colleges.

The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report advised that the Army link civilian training and leader development to promotion eligibility. Accordingly, the panel also recommended that the Army provide sufficient training and education opportunities. This would help prove the Army's commitment to professional development for civilian employees.⁴¹ Although the RETAL acknowledged the significant contribution towards advancement provided by training and development, it did not directly link training and education as a true promotion requirement.

Linking training and education to promotion eligibility would indeed serve to generate more interest and encourage greater participation in Army civilian training and education. However, there are significant obstacles to implementation of the panel's recommendation--not least of which would be obtaining concurrence from the Office of Personnel Management and from the various labor organizations who may believe that would pose an unfair obstacle to promotion.⁴²

Capacity for residential attendance at the AMSC Civilian Education System courses must also be considered. Assuming that 100 percent of instructor Table of distribution and allowances requirements are on hand, the AMSC can serve 2160 students in the Basic Course, 2112 students in the Intermediate Course, and 704 students in the Advanced Course annually.⁴³ If this career education were linked to promotion eligibility, the AMSC would need to be prepared to handle a larger number of students across all three courses. That precise number is currently unknown and would be affected by variables such as desire for promotion and downsizing of the ACC to meet budget constraints.

Senior Level Colleges

Senior Level Colleges (SLC), such as the Army War College, are the top-tier educational platforms within the services. They provide excellent instruction in an atmosphere of higher learning and provide an outstanding educational experience for the civilian workforce. Better yet, this learning takes place alongside the senior military officers whom the senior civilian employee will be working with, and for, in the future. Attendance at a SLC provides incalculable value to the civilian employee and to the institutional Army as well.⁴⁴

However, the SLC program for civilian employees presents a possible disconnect in priorities among stakeholders within a workforce development program. Upon graduation, and receipt of a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies, civilian graduates should be placed into new positions with strategic breadth to enable the graduate to capitalize on the knowledge gained at the SLC.⁴⁵ Students are encouraged to find positions that meet that description on their own, but the placement panel conducted through the Civilian Senior Leadership Management Office ultimately determines where each student will be assigned.⁴⁶

From the Army perspective, this assignment process makes sense. For individual employees and local commands however, it may serve to dissuade participation in SLCs. Anecdotal evidence suggests many senior civilian employees have decided to settle at their current location. Although they are willing to continue their education, they are loath to uproot their families and relocate. Similarly, as senior civilian employees who are competitive for attendance at an SLC are generally valued employees at their home station, it is a disincentive for the local Command to send them to attend an SLC with the knowledge that they will not return. This is not to insist that the policy necessarily requires change, but it could certainly bear further scrutiny.

Leader Emphasis

Leader emphasis is a crucial, yet often overlooked, part of any workforce development program. Data from the *2012 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Civilian Leaders* shows that only 46 percent of Army civilians believe their superior is effective or very effective at creating or identifying development opportunities.⁴⁷ Leaders at all levels must understand that developing their civilian subordinates contributes to long-term benefits for both the organization and the

individual. The time and resources required to develop subordinates may cause short-term hardship for the organization, but developing leaders must be considered as an investment in the future.⁴⁸

The Army Training and Leader Development Panel found that both employees and supervisors were not fully aware of the various training and education opportunities, available to them. Where they were aware, there were barriers to taking advantage of those opportunities, such as time constraints, lack of replacements for the attending students, and a general lack of emphasis on education.⁴⁹

However, emphasis should not be confused with enforcement or coercion. Choice and the willingness associated with the ability to choose, enhances motivation, and encourages self-actualization.⁵⁰ Managers may direct their employees to take training. Leaders, on the other hand, motivate their subordinates to further their knowledge, skills, and abilities through continuing education. Indeed, effective motivation can influence workers to participate in self-directed learning, by means of which they actively seek to gain further education on their own, outside the formal educational structure.⁵¹

Counseling

This remains an area of weakness within the ACC. Civilian evaluation reports are not tracked the way they are for the uniformed component. The 2012 CASAL indicates counseling is sometimes not completed at all, and rarely makes a positive contribution to professional development.⁵² The Army Training and Leader Development Panel found similar evidence.⁵³ The Army should develop and implement a tracking system for civilian employee evaluation reports. That administrative attention to evaluations would certainly spur a greater interest in employee counseling.

Counseling is a critical element in employee development - but is all too often misunderstood or left undone. All new employees must receive reception and integration counseling that not only clearly spells out expectations, but also identifies their opportunities and obligations, for future professional development as well.⁵⁴ Counseling should take place as often as needed, but mid-term and annual counseling should be the absolute minimum. Communication must flow in both directions, and employee interaction is critical to successful counseling, but the supervisor must set the stage and establish baseline training and educational requirements during the counseling session.⁵⁵

Army Career Tracker

The Army fielded the Army Career Tracker (ACT) as a tool to help employees chart their careers. From the ACT console, employees can review their career roadmap, develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) and chart future training and education goals. The system will also show CES completion status and show employees where they stand among their peers for education and IDP goals. Supervisor and mentors are granted access to this information once the employee selects their names from a drop down menu.⁵⁶ This provides a common operating picture to work from. ACT does require some emphasis. As of 2012, less than 1/3 of civilian leaders report having accessed and used ACT.⁵⁷

Gap Analysis

The first step towards effective employee development tailored to the individual, yet supportive of the organizational mission, is an accurate gap analysis.⁵⁸ Leader knowledge of the training and education required is a critical element in any employee development program.⁵⁹ Although Army Career Tracker has gone a long way to

simplifying this process, effective gap analysis still requires consideration of several elements including Army recurring training requirements such as suicide prevention training, job series specific requirements, or training with industry. Additionally, consideration should be given to advanced management and leadership training for those employees who demonstrate potential for further responsibilities. The Army has provided a general road map that aligns CES courses with civilian career progression by grade.

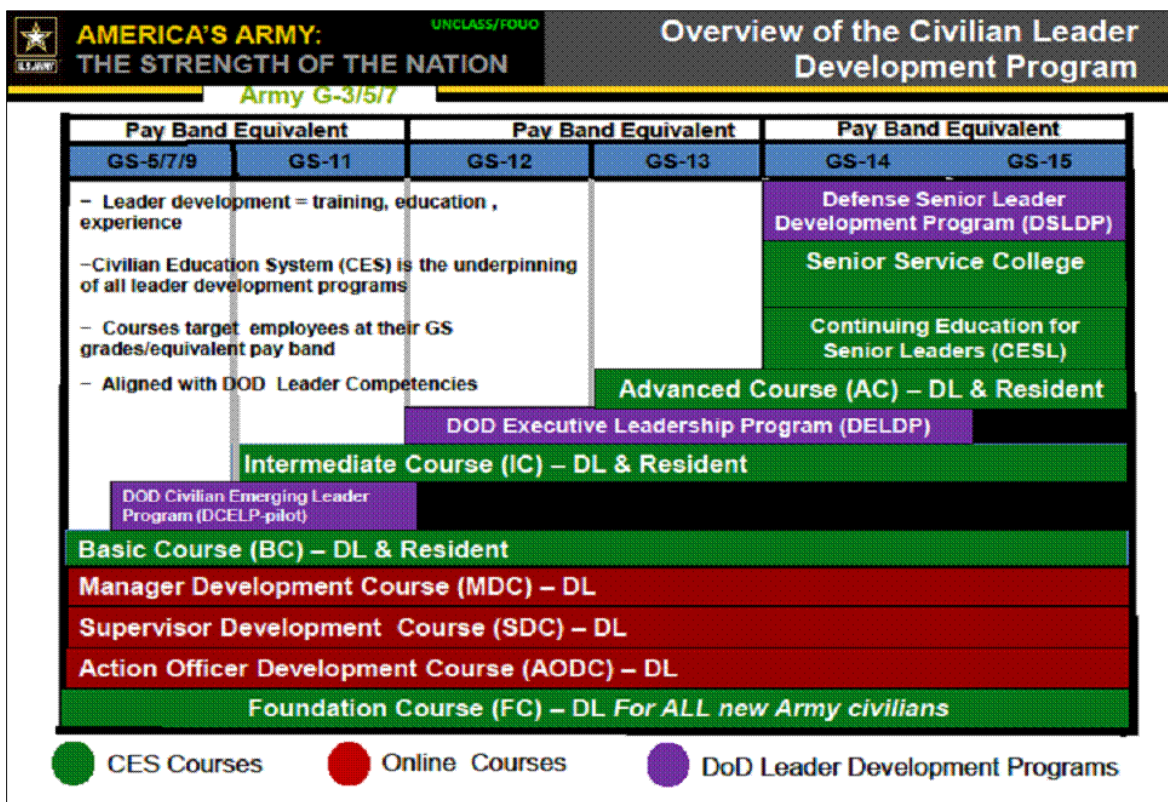


Figure 2. Overview of the Civilian Leader Development Program⁶⁰

Additionally, Functional Chief Representatives have provided career maps for their assigned CPs. These career maps are more detailed and are available through CP specific websites, the ACT, and the Civilian Workforce Transformation website.⁶¹ Reviewing that career map is generally the best place to begin gap analysis. For

example, CP 12, Safety and Occupational Health, includes a “Skills Assessment” form that all safety personnel are required to complete.⁶² Completion of the form provides the basis for the leader to begin the gap analysis on an employee. This review also provides the FCR with an overview of the training and education gaps that exist across the career program, allowing for effective resource allocation.

Individual Development Plans

Once the gap analysis has been completed, an Individual Development Plan (IDP) may be completed.⁶³ IDPs have proven to be problematic because standards and formats for the IDP differ across commands.⁶⁴ The initial IDP should be completed as a part of reception and integration counseling. IDPs are living documents; they may be updated as required. At a minimum, they should be updated annually as a part of the annual counseling program. An updated IDP should be considered as an integral part of the evaluation process and should be submitted with the evaluation and support form to the reviewer and senior reviewer.⁶⁵

Significantly, an IDP is essentially a contract between the supervisor and the subordinate, so input from both parties is needed to complete the plan. Effective IDPs ensure that organizational requirements are met and that realistic goals are set for the organization to resource and for the individual to attain.⁶⁶

Certain training and education requirements will be the same for all employees due to their status as Department of the Army (DA) Civilians, or within a particular job series. However, beyond these basic requirements, training and education should be tailored to the individual. Effective tailoring enables the supervisor to ensure the organization has the desired skills properly arrayed across the organization. This provides a more measured means to account for individual strengths and weaknesses.

Training and education must be focused on enhancing the former and overcoming the latter.

Resource Constraints

Resource constraints have always been a potential obstacle to workforce development; those constraints can be expected to only get worse in the foreseeable future. As we continue deeper into an era of extensive financial constraints, it will be tempting to cut training and educational programs. In fact, training and education will be as important, if not more so, than ever. The people we develop, or fail to develop, now will be our civilian leadership for years or decades.⁶⁷

Leaders must creatively use all available assets when implementing local workforce development programs. Use of all three educational domains is imperative as each supports a comprehensive development program at little or no cost to the local command, since so much is centrally funded or available via distance learning.

Higher headquarters, with significantly greater resources than the lower level organizations, can be a tremendous asset in workforce development. Training and Doctrine Command provides a Senior Leader Development program for high potential GS-13 to GS15 employees. The program is nominative and very competitive, with an average of seven employees selected each year. Participants join in a mix of activities over the course of the two-year program: formal mentorship from a senior leader, formal training at organizations such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard, and the Brookings Institution, and to developmental assignments that provide broadening.⁶⁸

Creative and constructive use of other available resources, such as funding through the individual career programs, can augment the local program. Leaders should

also research the availability of additional programs may be offered by higher-level commands and the DA.

Cost benefit analysis should be applied to select the best means to deliver training. Delivery via video teleconferencing and web-based distance learning dramatically reduce costs. However, these lower cost media may not be as effective for all audiences and topics. Where the more traditional training (teacher and students in the same room) is required, consider all aspects of the requirement. If there are many students that require the same course, it may be more cost effective to bring the course to home station rather than paying the temporary duty for many students to attend the training at an off-site.

Leaders must also remember that the self-development and organizational domains are viable domains for learning as well; they should not rely too much on the institutional domain to develop their employees.⁶⁹ Education within these domains can be done for little or no cost, using tools as simple as the multitude of available web-based learning products, or arranging for a local subject matter expert to provide a class in a relevant area, at little or no cost.⁷⁰

Lifelong Learning

In the words of President William Jefferson Clinton:

In the 19th century, young Americans needed, at most, a high school education to make their way. It was good enough if they could read well and understand basic math. As the 20th century progressed, more and more people needed more education, including college. In the 21st century, our people will have to continue learning throughout their lives.⁷¹

This holds true in the Army workplace, where strategy, doctrine, laws, and regulations are continuously updated, resource constraints require innovative and imaginative solutions, and where technology evolves at an unprecedented pace. The

challenge is to provide learning opportunities and motivate employees to pursue lifelong learning.

The Army Training and Leader Development Panel defined lifelong learning as:

The individual pursuit of knowledge, the comprehension of ideas, and the expansion of contextual depth. It determined that lifelong learning is the essential foundation for transforming leader development in a transforming Army. The ATLDP also asserted that the challenge for organizations today is to instill, at the individual level, the desire to make the overt act of learning a lifelong pursuit. In the absence of individual motivation, organizations fall short of realizing their full potential.⁷²

That assertion is supported by existing educational theory, as well as the ATLDP and RETAL reports.

Alvin and Heidi Toffler propose that the world has undergone two great waves of change, agricultural and industrial. They believe a third great wave of change is now affecting the ways we are dealing with space, time, logic, and causality. They further describe societies (and by extension: organizations) as consisting of many elements that are all connected in immensely complex and continuously changing feedback loops. This increased complexity makes knowledge critical to economic and ecological survival.⁷³

Malcolm Knowles furthers the Tofflers' line of reasoning by postulating that education-or, even better, learning-must now be defined as a lifelong process. The primary learning during youth will be the skills of inquiry and the learning after schooling is done will be focused on acquiring the knowledge, skills, understanding, and values required for living adequately in a rapidly changing world.⁷⁴

These concepts are fully applicable to the ACC, as the Army operates in rapidly changing environment.

Training and Doctrine Command Pam 525-8-2, *The US Army Learning Model for 2015*, describes this concept as the Continuous Adaptive Learning Model: a framework

designed to support learning that is timely and topical throughout a career and at key points within that career. A pivotal element of that framework includes the concept of outcome-based training, through all educational domains, that not only presents instructional material, but helps the student develop the ability to think and learn their own, and establish a learning continuum throughout their career.⁷⁵ Although TRADOC Pamphlet 525-8-2 is Soldier-centric, the concept is fully applicable to civilian workforce development, with lifelong learning as a central component.

Self Development

The Army does provide a plethora of self-developmental opportunities for employees, particularly through the on-line Army Learning Management System.⁷⁶ Distance learning via the internet is a common mechanism available for self-development (and mandatory training). Available training runs the gamut, ranging from training specific to a particular job series, to general developmental training.

An important leadership consideration is that self-development is one of the three educational domains and an integral element of the overall civilian workforce development program. Self-development should support the organizational mission, grow the employee professionally, and be identified on the IDP. Although this area was not surveyed in the 2012 CASAL, results from 2011 indicated that only 38 percent of civilian leaders believed their organization made time available for self-development.⁷⁷ Duty time should be set aside for self-development activities, just as it is for the institutional and organizational domains.⁷⁸

One concern with distance learning is computer availability. General Schedule employees tend to take that availability for granted as most have a dedicated computer at their workstation. That is not the case for many Wage Grade and Non-Appropriated

Fund employees. Many of those employees are “blue collar” and they do not have a dedicated computer in the workplace. Supervisors must plan to provide computer accessibility for these employees and allow for more time for the organization as a whole to complete training. Most Installations have computer labs at the library and the education center to support self-development activities.

Incentives

Incentives for training and education can be controversial. Conventional wisdom indicates that not only are training and education required, but they provide their own inherent rewards, tangible or otherwise. That is true, but a relatively small incentive for achieving a milestone can impact morale far beyond the cost of the incentive. Incentives should be awarded for completion of a series of training and educational requirements that support the organizational mission and enhance personal and professional development. These requirements should be both challenging and achievable by any motivated employee. Incentive awards can be as simple as a certificate of achievement or an 8-hour time-off award. They can have tremendous impact for negligible cost.⁷⁹

While some aspects of a workforce development program apply to all employees, other aspects should be reserved for exceptional employees who demonstrate the highest performance and have the greatest promise. This is particularly true for those training events that are considered to be of extremely high value such as training with outside institutions such as the Federal Executive Institute or Harvard University.

Properly implemented competition can be healthy and can incite employees to push for a higher standard. It can also provide the extra benefit of creating excitement about the program. Care must be taken to ensure that the selection process for higher-level training and education is both fair and transparent; otherwise, it could lead to the

perception of favoritism and thus foment discontent and poor morale in the workplace. Installation level implementation of a panel selection process for attendance at advanced training, similar to that used by Headquarters, Department of the Army when selecting SLC students, will help ensure parity.⁸⁰

Mentorship

As stated in DA Pam 690-46, *Mentoring for Civilian Members of the Force*, the Army is committed to “ensuring that no employees who have the ability, aptitude, and desire to advance are hindered because of artificial barriers that preclude advancement.”⁸¹

Mentorship is further defined as “a voluntary and developmental relationship that exists between a person with greater experience and a person with less experience, and successful mentoring is characterized by mutual trust and respect.”⁸²

Mentorship can be provided through a formal program designed to pair a senior person with a junior,⁸³ but here we will concentrate on the inherent mentorship function of any leader. Too often leaders tend to concentrate on the organizational activities to the detriment of employee development. Organizational health can be critical to mission accomplishment and employee development must be considered a significant contributor to organizational health.

Leaders at all levels have the obligation to mentor their subordinate workers. Not only does this facilitate development, but it also communicates appropriate care and concern to the employee. Employees who feel they are a part of a larger community that truly cares for their welfare tend to be both more satisfied and more productive.⁸⁴

Developmental Assignments

Developmental assignments provide another means for self-development; they broaden the organizational perspective of civilian employees by placing them temporarily into a job outside their experience and comfort zone. This is an excellent way to provide experience, develop confidence, and establish relationships across career field “stovepipes.”⁸⁵ For example, the Senior Enterprise Talent Management program offers competitive developmental assignments to senior civilian employees. It will centrally fund these assignments.⁸⁶

Developmental assignments do not necessarily require assignees to relocate nor do they need to cost the local command any funds. A short-term developmental assignment to another directorate on the installation, or even to a brigade, can accomplish the same goals, just at the lower level. They are an excellent means for fostering greater understanding of supported or supporting organizations and increasing cooperation at the installation level.

Recommendations

The Army has made significant strides to strengthen Civilian Workforce Development by acting affirmatively on the recommendations of the Army Training and Leader Development Panel and Report of Review of Education, Training, and Assignments for Leaders. However, there remains room for improvement. Evidence suggests that civilian workforce development within the Army must be dynamic; evolving just as missions, technology, and the workplace will evolve. The recommendations listed below will support that evolution, but the civilian workforce itself remains the most important means to improve, and sustain, workforce development within the Army. Training and education can no longer be considered as an “additional

task,” outside the scope of the normal duty day, but rather a fully integrated part of the job itself.

While the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA M&RA) maintains overall responsibility for manpower supervision under Title 10 of the US Code,⁸⁷ and accepts that responsibility within the ASA M&RA mission statement,⁸⁸ key components of the Army staff, specifically the Army G-1 and G3/5/7, are recommended as the lead agents for implementation of the recommendations. It must also be remembered that the ACC leaders and employees are the most critical links in the workforce development process. True success depends on effective and continual engagement by all.

Recommendations for improvement include:

1. Reinforce the concept of the Army as a profession for the Army Civilian Corps through the effective use of strategic communication (STRACOM).⁸⁹ While 88 percent of civilian leaders believe that the Army is a profession, only 50 percent believe that all members are professional. Additionally, 2 out of 3 civilian leaders indicate they were unaware of the Army Profession Campaign.⁹⁰ STRATCOM measures such as the Center for the Army Professional Ethic (CAPE) website⁹¹, and incorporating the Army Profession Campaign throughout institutional curriculum, are effective tools to accomplish this task.⁹² This task should be led by the Army G-3/5/7 and will assist with the continuing cultural inculcation of the Army as a profession.
2. Continue the ongoing Civilian Workforce Transformation effort that includes the TRADOC acculturation program⁹³ and the Army Management and Staff

College review and upgrade to the legacy CES curriculum.⁹⁴ This task should be led by the Army G-3/5/7. Effective implementation will better integrate the ACC with the supported uniformed component, and will support the concepts of the ACC as a community and of lifelong learning in the transformational Army of today.

3. Implement a civilian evaluation tracking system, similar to those in place for uniformed leaders, to ensure that civilian evaluation reports are properly completed and lead to appropriate counseling opportunities.⁹⁵ Employees require continuous and effective feedback from their leaders in order to grow as professionals. This task should be led by the Army G-1.
4. Establish civilian workforce development as a performance measure for civilian evaluation reports. There are currently no ramifications for supervisors who do not support their subordinates (and organization) through effective and comprehensive workforce development.⁹⁶ Incorporating workforce development as a performance measure will serve to remind supervisors of their training and education responsibilities. This task should be led by the Army G-1.
5. Implement a standardized Individual Development Plan (IDP) format for all employees, using Army Career Tracker⁹⁷ as the delivery vehicle. Mandate and explain IDP usage in AR 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development*.⁹⁸ IDP standardization will generate a better, and wider, understanding of the IDP process. This task should be led by the Army G-1.

6. Specify training and education requirements in Position Descriptions (PDs) of new employees. Since not all employees will come from within the Army system, these requirements should be established with a timeline and associated with the probationary period: i.e., must have completed, or be able to complete within one year, the appropriate CES Course(s). This initiative will ensure that new employees begin their new job with a firm training and education foundation. This task should be led by the Army G-1, but will also require coordination with the local servicing Civilian Personnel Action Center (CPAC) to ensure PDs are in compliance with Office of Personnel Management (OPM) standards.
7. Renew and reinvigorate efforts to ensure all employees are aware of the training and education opportunities and requirements that are available to them. Ensure that supervisors understand the importance of leader emphasis for workforce development. This must start from the top, but also must be reinforced by all levels and permeate throughout the organization.⁹⁹ The Army provides a wide variety of excellent training and education opportunities, but leaders must ensure that those opportunities are available to all. This task should be led by the Army G-3/5/7.

Conclusion

As our Army draws down, so too must the ACC adapt. It must develop a highly skilled and adaptable bench of civilian members, ready to support our uniformed brethren at any time, and in any mission.

I am an Army Civilian - a member of the Army Team.
I am dedicated to our Army, our Soldiers and Civilians.
I will always support the mission.
I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.
I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it
an honor to serve our Nation and our Army.
I live the Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor,
Integrity, and Personal Courage.
I am an Army Civilian.

—The Army Civilian Creed¹⁰⁰

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